



Nesciobrug, the bicycle bridge to Amsterdam IJburg

XXX Gemeente Amsterdam



Amsterdam paves the way for cyclists

History of cycling

At the turn of the twentieth century, cycling was common in all European cities. As the automobile gained in popularity, bicycles disappeared from many city streets. In the Netherlands, however, and especially in Amsterdam, with our narrow streets and many canals, the bicycle remained a handy and popular means of transportation.

In the 1970s, people began to grow concerned about the environment. The oil crisis, the warnings by the Club of Rome and the increasing traffic burden led Amsterdam to pay more attention to cycling in its policies. Over the past thirty years, the City of Amsterdam has always chosen to protect the cyclists' interests. This had led to many people choosing to use the bicycle for their daily commute. Everyone benefits, as the bicycle is the ideal means of transportation to build an accessible, sustainable and pleasant city.

Amsterdam paves the way for cyclists.

Amsterdam bicycle network

- Hoofdnet Fiets
- - - Future Hoofdnet Fiets
- Missing link in the Hoofdnet Fiets
- Outside of Amsterdam

The area shown is approx. 22 kilometres across.



Colophon

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www.fiets.amsterdam.nl

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There is no city in the world where people cycle as much as in Amsterdam. The Amsterdam people cycle to work in the morning; they take their children to school on bicycles and do their shopping on bicycles. In the weekend, they cycle to the beautiful nature areas that surround Amsterdam.

Cities such as Paris, London, Barcelona and Rome are increasingly inspired by our city. They see Amsterdam as a good example of how a city can be both mobile and pleasant to live in.

For the residents of Amsterdam, cycling is an ordinary, everyday affair, but is it really so ordinary? Is it ordinary in a world in which the consequences of climate change are increasingly apparent? In a world that threatens to choke on traffic and smog?

Unfortunately, no. It is not ordinary.

That is why the City of Amsterdam likes bicycles, and encourages Amsterdammers to use them for transportation.

The City has made its bicycle policy a priority. In the coming years, it will spend a great deal of time, money and thought on investing in everything that has to do with cycling; from safe bicycle routes to more and better bicycle parking. From theft prevention to green wave traffic control measures for bicycles.

In this brochure you can read all about our initiatives, but don't just take our word for it – look at our actions as well. I invite you to discover all of the measures we are taking throughout the city.

And there's only one way to do it – on a bicycle!

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a long horizontal stroke.

Tjeerd Herrema
Alderman for Traffic, Transport and Infrastructure



Peter (52), businessman

'I like cycling to work so that I can begin the day fresh. Cycling allows me to leave the worries of the day behind me on the way home. Keeping myself a bit fit by cycling to work is a pleasant bonus. It is only when it is raining hard that I take public transport or use the car.'

- Amsterdam has approximately 550,000 bicycles.

- 75% of all residents of Amsterdam aged 12 or older own a bicycle. Half of them use it daily.

- In Amsterdam, 37% of all movements from one place to another are done by bicycle, 41% by car and 22% by public transportation. In the city centre, bicycles are responsible for 55% of all movements from A to B, and in the nineteenth-century neighbourhoods that percentage is 50%.

- Each year, over 50,000 bicycles are stolen. Our goal is to reduce this number by 40% by 2010.

Amsterdam's ambitions

To stimulate the use of bicycles for transportation, Amsterdam has drawn up a Long-Term Policy Plan for Bicycles (Meerjarenbeleidsplan Fiets – MJP). This plan details the following goals for the year 2010:

- In 2010, at least 37% of the residents of Amsterdam will use bicycles for each trip.
- In that same year, Amsterdam must achieve a score of at least 7.5 out of 10 in the Cyclists Satisfaction Survey.
- In 2010, the number of bicycle thefts will be reduced by 40%.

Bicycle policy in brief

- More parking facilities for bicycles.
- Continuation of active prevention of bicycle theft.
- Completion and improvement of the Amsterdam bike path network (Hoofdnet Fiets).
- Promotion of bicycle traffic safety.
- More non-cyclists on bicycles.

More 'Amsterdammers' on bikes

The bicycle is not an obvious choice for all of Amsterdam's residents. Young people cycle less often, and Amsterdam's immigrants are also less likely to choose to ride bicycles. That is understandable, as they did not grow up with the Dutch bicycling culture. And since young people learn to cycle from their parents, second-generation immigrants are also less likely to use bicycles as well.

The City is taking a number of initiatives to coax non-cyclists onto bicycles. For instance, children are given lessons in cycling safely through the city,

and can earn a cycling diploma. The City is also working on a school route planner to help students find safe routes to and from school. In addition, the City will soon begin supporting a number of social organisations that will provide cycling lessons to adults who have never learned how to ride a bicycle.

Safety first

The best way to cycle safely is to cycle in a city geared towards traffic safety for cyclists. That is why the City is investing a great deal in traffic safety. Dangerous intersections and unsafe routes are being dealt with and the City is building separate bike paths next to busy roads, where possible.

The City is also holding cyclists accountable for their own cycling habits. The 'Val op' ('Get Noticed') campaign to promote proper bicycle lighting is one successful example of these efforts. And although it may not always be pleasant, consistent enforcement of traffic regulations by the police does contribute to safety. Rather a fine than an accident!

A unique bike path network

Amsterdam has a unique road network for cyclists: the Hoofdnet Fiets. Thanks to this network of bicycle-friendly routes, every part of the city can be easily reached by bicycle. Over the next few years, the City will continue to expand and maintain the Hoofdnet Fiets, and will study whether it is feasible to connect Amsterdam-Noord with the rest of the city with several bicycle bridges over the IJ.

- The Amsterdam Bicycle Processing Centre (Amsterdamse Fietsafhandel Centrale – AFAC) has registered the unique marks of approximately 135,000 bicycles. The more bicycles are registered, the better the chances that bikes will be returned after they have been stolen.

- 85% of the trips by bicycle in Amsterdam are shorter than 5 kilometres.

- Amsterdam has more than 400 kilometres of bike paths.

- Amsterdam has 140 bicycle shops.

- The 780 metres long Nesciobrug is the longest bicycle bridge in the Netherlands.



Cecilia (39), mother

Cecilia brings her four year-old son to school every day, from Noord to the Oostelijke Eilanden neighbourhood.

'Public transportation is not really an option with a kindergartner, a baby and shopping bags. When I go to the city centre, I can park my carrier bicycle at the Locker, which doesn't cost anything anymore. I feel very mobile and free.'

'It took a while getting used to this bicycle. It's tricky to control on narrow bike paths.'



Vydia (58), cyclist in training

‘I would like to be able to ride bikes with my grandson. I had a bad accident twenty-five years ago, and haven’t cycled since. Now I have to learn how again.’

‘We are given classroom lessons, and then we hit the road. The actual cycling is the hardest part. I’m used to driving, so I can deal with the traffic. But the other cyclists are often very rude, especially in the city centre.’

‘It’s easier to force myself to do it, since we practise in groups. Cycling is also good for your self-confidence.’

Technical Innovations

In order to make cycling safer, faster and more pleasant, the City utilises technical innovations wherever possible. For instance, over the past few years the traffic lights have been adapted to the needs of the cyclists. A good example is the green wave traffic control measure for cyclists in the Raadhuisstraat.

We have had a great deal of success with wait timers. These traffic lights count down the number of seconds before the light turns green. Cyclists have proven to be more likely to stop and wait at a red light if they know how long they will have to wait.

Cyclists’ comfort has been improved by placing two Dynamic Route Information Panels at the ferry bridge for the ferries to Amsterdam Noord. This enables cyclists to see which ferry will depart first from a distance.

Where can I park my bicycle?

With approximately 550,000 bicycles in the city, there is a high demand for good bicycle parking facilities. However, there is not much space available in the city centre and the nineteenth-century neighbourhoods. Increasing mobility is placing great pressure on public spaces. This situation is worsened by the building sites for the Noord-Zuid metro line and the many other large construction projects in the city. The city is therefore constantly searching for innovative ways to store bicycles. One well-known example is the bicycle tower near Amsterdam Central Station.

The City is also making agreements with developers building homes and

- Amsterdam’s cyclists have access to more than 20 manned bicycle parking facilities and dozens of neighbourhood facilities.

- The City is stimulating car owners to use bicycles for trips of less than 5 kilometres.

- The majority of Amsterdam’s cyclists are well-educated, have a higher income and are between 25 and 55 years old.

- Each day, the people of Amsterdam ride more than 2 million kilometres on their bicycles.

The AFAC: an Amsterdam success story

In the struggle against bicycle theft, Amsterdam has come up with a unique tool: the Amsterdam Bicycle Processing Centre (Amsterdamse Fietsafhandel Centrale – AFAC)). Some of the AFAC's activities include:

- The AFAC processes all bicycles removed or found by the city boroughs, checks whether they are stolen and provides them with a unique code. Wrecked bicycles are destroyed after 14 days. All other bicycles are held for three months. If no one claims them, they are sold to bicycle dealers or employment projects.
- The AFAC offers cyclists the option of engraving their bicycles with a unique code, both at the centre itself as well as at a location in the city. Stolen bicycles with this code are easy to deliver back to their owners. It is also easier for a bicycle owner to report his or her bicycle stolen if it has a code engraved.
- The AFAC is building a database in which approximately 135,000 bicycles are registered. In the future, this information will be coupled to the national database of the Government Road Transport Agency (RDW).

The AFAC's success has not gone unnoticed. A number of municipalities have since begun their own AFAC programmes.

offices to ensure that they include sufficient bicycle parking facilities in their designs. At the same time, many bicycle parking facilities, called Locker, have been placed throughout the city, and more will follow in the coming years. Lockers are manned parking facilities that are administered by the City and are located at busy locations such as shopping areas, stations and near pubs, cafés and discos. The City also has mobile Locker facilities to use during large public events such as concerts or the Uitmarkt.

Bicycle gone?!

Nothing is as irritating as having your bicycle stolen. Unfortunately, all too many Amsterdammers have experienced that frustration. Although bicycle theft has decreased significantly in recent years thanks to an active prevention policy, about ten percent of Amsterdam's bicycles – around 50,000 – are stolen each year. That is far too many. The City's goal is to reduce bicycle theft by 40%. Working with the police and the Ministry of Justice, the City has taken the following measures to combat bicycle theft:

- The appointment of an inspector to monitor the trade in second-hand bicycles to track illegal sales.
- The activities of the Amsterdamse Fietsafhandel Centrale (AFAC) (see left page).
- The deployment of a special engraving team that engraves bicycles throughout the city and records the bicycles in the AFAC register.
- The deployment of special teams that check bicycles on the street and around stations to see if they have been reported as stolen.
- Publicity campaigns to inform cyclists on how to prevent bicycle theft.



Karin (age 34), HR consultant

Karin cycles to work every day, from Amsterdam West to Amsterdam Zuid.

‘Cycling is the perfect way to get to work.

I avoid all of the traffic and don’t have to worry about parking. At work we have a locked bicycle shed, and I know exactly at what time I’ll arrive.

With public transportation, I would have to transfer several times.’

In a busy city like Amsterdam, you have to stay alert. But still, what’s better than cycling home in the fresh air after a day at the office?’



Luis (50), expat

‘I taught myself how to ride bicycles. The coaster brake is a typically Dutch phenomenon, just like separate bike paths. The Netherlands is a bicycling nation; everyone I know has a bicycle.’

‘I’m only a fair-weather cyclist.

Amsterdam Cycling to Sustainability

In order to support the goal of achieving sustainable mobility, a number of parties in Amsterdam, including the City, have founded the Platform for Sustainable Mobility as an initiative of Amsterdam Cycling to Sustainability.

Amsterdam Cycling to Sustainability's goals are:

- Supporting and developing projects to stimulate a variety of forms of sustainable mobility.
- Promoting the City of Amsterdam as a sustainable mobile city abroad. In doing so, the organisation has chosen to emphasise the bicycle as a unique selling point.
- The foundation of a knowledge institute for sustainable mobility in co-operation with other Amsterdam knowledge institutions.

Amsterdam: sustainable and mobile

Due to the changing climate, increased (air) pollution and high demand for fossil fuels, people around the world are beginning to become aware that it is time for other forms of transportation. In Amsterdam, we have therefore chosen for sustainable mobility. For transportation that forms the least burden for society. In doing so, Amsterdam is leading the way with its unique infrastructure, strict parking policy and in banning high-pollution vehicles. But it also stimulates new initiatives such as the cargo tram, the cargo bike, electric scooters, boats powered by natural gas and buses powered by hydrogen.

The City wishes to play a leading role in bundling, providing and developing knowledge in the field of sustainable mobility. That is why a number of parties in Amsterdam’s business community, consumer organisations, and the City and knowledge institutions have taken the initiative to form a Platform for Sustainable Mobility. The parties work together under the name of Amsterdam Cycling to Sustainability. This initiative will work towards reinforcing Amsterdam’s position as a sustainably mobile city and as a bicycle city through a number of projects (see Amsterdam Cycling to Sustainability).

The numbers tell the tale

In order to determine whether the bicycle policy is effective, the City performs a number of surveys and measurements each year. For instance, the City keeps track of the percentage of people in Amsterdam who use bicycles each year, and it measures bicycle traffic at different points throughout the city. It also performs a Cyclists Satisfaction Survey each year to study how satisfied Amsterdam’s cyclists are regarding the bicycle facilities in the city. Based on the results of this study, the City examines whether the policy is successful or if it requires adjustments. In 2007, the Survey gave Amsterdam a 7.2. The goal for 2010 is a score of 7.5.



Imre (9), elementary school student

Imre cycles to school every day and to her piano lessons and sports every week.

'I use my bike every day, because it gets you everywhere the fastest.
But sometimes it's dangerous, because so many people ignore red lights.'